

he belongs, and from whose enchanting history, excepting their misfortunes, he reasons to his own future experience. So too the man, whose fancy anticipates political or martial distinction, allows his thoughts to revert continually to those names which a rare conjunction of talents and circumstances has elevated into fame; forgetting that many thousands of men of great ability have died in at least comparative obscurity, for want of situations in which to display themselves; and never suspecting it possible that his own abilities are not competent to anything great, if some extraordinary event were just now to place him in the most opportune concurrence of circumstances. That there has been one very signal man to a million, more avails to the presumption that he shall be a signal man, than there having been a million to one signal man, infers a probability of his remaining one of the multitude.

You will generally observe, that persons thus self-appointed, of either sex, to be exceptions to the usual lot of humanity, endeavour at a kind of consistency of character, by a great aversion to the common modes of action and language, and a habitual affectation of something extraordinary. They will perhaps disdain regular hours, punctuality to engagements, usual dresses, a homely diction, and common forms of transacting business; this you are to regard as the impulse of a spirit whose high vocation authorizes it to renounce all signs of relation to vulgar minds.

The epithet romantic then may be justly applied to those presumptions (if entertained after the childish or very youthful age) of a peculiarly happy or important destiny in life, which are not clearly founded on certain palpable distinctions of character or situation, or which greatly exceed the sober prognostics afforded by those distinctions.—It should be observed here that *wishes* merely do not constitute a character romantic. A person may sometimes let his mind wander into vain wishes for all the fine things on earth, and yet be too sober to expect any of them. In this case however he will often check and reproach himself for the folly of indulging in such mental dissoluteness.

The absurdity of such anticipations consists simply in the improbability of their being realized, and not in their objects being uncongenial with the human mind; but another effect of the predominance of imagination may be a disposition to